

MONTGOMERY COUNTY FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE

FIRE ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT

February 2003

OFFICE OF THE FIRE ADMINISTRATOR

Commission Office

The following items were discussed at the February 13, 2003 meeting of the Fire and rescue Commission:

- The PS2000 project remains on schedule to proceed with cutover to the new radio system on April 13, 2003.
- The new Fire and Rescue Occupational Medical Services (FROMS) facility has opened at 255 Rockville Pike. The MCFRS Exercise Physiologist, the MCFRS Psychologist, and the MCFRS behavioral health team are housed at this facility.
- The DOL Executive Regulation has been advertised by the County Executive's office in the County *Register*.
- Joseph Beach, Acting Director of the Office of Management and Budget, made a presentation regarding the Consolidated Fire Tax District and its relationship to other taxes levied by the County.
- An overview of the LFRD second quarter fiscal analysis was provided. Of the 11 LFRDs that submitted a second quarter analysis thus far, an overall deficit of \$117,000 is projected for FY03.

Research and Planning

The Office of Research and Planning continues to be significantly involved in the development and presentation of the Fire Administrators proposed budget, focusing upon the anticipated impacts of proposed service delivery changes. Other areas of work activity for the Office of Research and Planning include:

- Preparation of CIP Budget Proposals
- Completion of Rescue Squad Study, which is now out for review and comment
- Continued work on site selection for new and relocation fire station projects
- Familiarization of EOC Operation for new County Council members
- Formalization of work plan for new Fire/Rescue/EMS Master Plan
- Lead on Performance Measures for MCFRS
- Coordinating the Leadership Montgomery Public Safety session
- Continued planning and technology integration for new EOC construction
- Responding to many requests to provide information related to the Homeland Security Advisory System raising the threat level on 2/7/03

In addition, the GIS manager reported the following activity:

- Updated the EOC shelter database and created a GIS file from the information.
- Worked on a map series of the CSX railroad tracks in Station 14's first due.
- Examined program measures, station area population and call volume for the Bureau of Operations.
- Created potential reorganization maps.
- Created Rescue Squad Study PowerPoint presentation

Emergency Management

LEPC – The Local Emergency Planning Council for Hazardous Materials held its quarterly meeting in February. Members were briefed on the Homeland Security Alert system, and reviewed a draft of new bylaws. The bylaws are a precondition of designation as an “active” LEPC eligible to receive grant funds from MDE in 2005 from the newly passed hazardous materials Maryland Community Right to Know Fund. K. Henning updated the LEPC on 2003 SERC Training and Planning grants. A special commendation for Best Practices was awarded to Chip Scuderi of Scuderi Autobody for development of a pollution free paint gun cleaning machine. The patented device has received national EPA recognition. Mr. Scuderi briefed the LEPC on the workings of the device which eliminates lacquer up to 80%. Zohrah Movahed from WSSC discussed the development of an integrated “one plan” to meet multiple federal and state regulatory plan requirements for hazardous materials.

Emergency Preparedness Program for Health Facilities – Office of Emergency Management co-hosted a Terrorism Emergency Preparedness Program for Health Care Providers with the County Health Department. Attending were over 265 representatives from nursing homes and assisted living facilities at the University of Maryland Shady Grove campus. Red Cross participated and provided toolkits to each registered nursing home. K. Henning was a speaker and member of the follow-up panel.

Dirty Bomb- Plans are underway for the Radiological Dirty Bomb exercise to be conducted on March 25th. Bob Nemchin has been the lead for the multi-agency exercise design team. Planners include fire department, bomb squad, and haz-mat team personnel. Others include representatives from the Cities of Rockville and Gaithersburg, other county agencies, state and federal agencies. The full scale exercise will have two field sites: National Naval Medical Center and the Gaithersburg Fairgrounds. NNMC will stress decontamination of victims and transport to their hospital. Other area hospitals will participate as part of a communications exercise. FBI and State Police are expected at the Unified Command Post while State Health and MIEMSS will be at the EOC. The exercise will be a regional exercise involving notifications of COG and other jurisdictions. Over 20 citizens have signed up to be victims from various communities including teenagers and senior citizens. The EOC will be fully activated.

Automation - Communication and automation systems for the EOC will be tested during the RADEX including the Dialogic and RoamSecure automated notification systems, RAMSafe EOC and field data management system, and the RICC. Planning meetings have been held with the vendors. A joint EMG Exercise Design Committee was held with the EMG Automation and EMG Communications committees to discuss testing of automated systems. District Chief Resnick and Albert George are the lead for automation issues with OEM. Dist. Chief Lohr is the lead as the EMG Communications Chair.

Volunteers - The annual EMG Volunteer Awards and Recognition was held on February 13th. New ID cards were issued at the event. Internal Affairs worked with OEM to develop the new ID cards. OEM briefed volunteers on post September 11th new security procedures prior to issuing ID cards. Special Certificates of Appreciation were presented to Jane Servais and Al Rossi from Mid-Atlantic DOGS, Vicki Osman from Red Cross (for support at the County Fair), and John Creel and Howard Gorden (RACES) for exercise and EOC activation support.

Training – The annual EMG Communications in Disaster class held February 13th was highly successful with over 90 attendees (previous years have had between 25-40). Topics included briefings on the new 911 Center, MEMA upgrades, use of Dialogic Automated notification system, changes to hospital communications and notification, and features of the 800 and 900 Mhz systems.

Governance Committee – Mike Krumlauf has been attending the meetings of the Governance Committee for the PSCC. OEM will be relocated to the Gaithersburg site along with the new ECC, EOC, TMC, and other services in the combined PSCC. Issues relating to construction and phone service are currently on the agenda.

RI Fire – K. Henning was activated by HHS for the federally deployed DMORT to respond to the Station nightclub fire in Warwick, RI. Ms. Henning worked in the morgue and also trained in the command center.

NVOAD – K. Henning attended a two day workshop as a member of a federally appointed Steering Committee of the National Volunteers Organized to Assist in Disaster. The committee reviewed the issue of managing spontaneous volunteers who respond to disasters. FEMA, Points of Light, Salvation Army, Red Cross, NEMA, IAEM, and American Volunteers Association participated in the strategic planning and development of a draft Concept of Operations for state and local governments to help manage spontaneous, unaffiliated volunteers. Drafts will be available by summer after review by national organizations.

Training – OEM staff have attended the radio and Mobile Data terminal training at Fleet street. The new devices will be loaded onto EMC-1 Communications vehicle (former ambulance).

Retirement – Bob Nemchin, Program Manager I has announced his retirement effective April 30, 2003. Bob will be recognized at the April LEPC meeting.

QLF – Plans are underway for the Quarterly Leadership Forum March 27th to present Homeland Security briefings and updates on the Homeland Security Alert System to senior county officials.

COG Exercise – Montgomery County has been designated as the “impact” area for the virtual RICC COG terrorism exercise in April. E-Team and COG officials will train OEM and ECC staff on the system March 14th.

Community Education Safety Section

Each year at least 74,000 children die of poisoning. Most are young children unable to distinguish between foods and toxins. **March 16-22 is National Poison Prevention Week.** Sponsored by the Poison Prevention Week Council, this year's theme "*Children Act Fast...So Do Poisons*" urges parents to store harmful products out of their children's reach at all times, and to be aware of young children's growing capacities to explore and experiment. National Poison Prevention Week provides a great opportunity to deliver important safety messages to your community as part of a comprehensive Risk Watch strategy. Visit the www.riskwatch.org Poison Prevention page in the Parent Pages section for more information. Also, visit www.sparky.org for poison messages just for children and to download Sparky's Scavenger Hunt for Poison or call Beth Anne for stickers, handouts and activities.

Risk Watch is on the Move!

What is Risk Watch? For those of you that aren't familiar . . . Risk Watch is the first comprehensive injury prevention program designed for use in classrooms. Linking teachers with community safety experts and parents, Risk Watch effectively teaches kids and their families the skills and knowledge they need to be safe from the areas they're at greatest risk to unintentional injuries. See our website for more information!

NFPA developed its **Champion Award Program** in 1994 to help communities deal proactively with public safety issues impacting today's children and families. It is a strategic initiative that helps local public educators and safety advocates introduce Risk Watch to key decision-makers and implement the injury prevention program in schools. Maryland has been selected as a Champion state for Risk Watch and the Montgomery County Fire and Rescue Service has been selected to serve on the Championship Leadership Team that will train in Boston March 19 – 23rd. To date, 28 states have been recognized by the NFPA as “champions” and this will provide Montgomery County with additional resources not only to launch Risk Watch in schools but to continue to expand the impact of Risk Watch over the long-term.

Be part of the action – contact Beth Anne Nesselt 240-777-2463 to get involved, find out more or visit riskwatch.org to see where you fit in!

IT Section

Enterprise Services

- Responded to 4 data requests and continued working with the County Attorney on a lawsuit filed against the department.
- Met with the Desktop Computer Modernization office to discuss replacement of the EMBRS computers, replacement of the other MCFRS GX1 computers and replacement /upgrade of station computers so they can be connected to the county network. Currently developing a plan and schedule to begin this process in May.
- Continued work preparing the CY2002 incident and unit data for the annual report, to prepare the NFPA report and to submit to the state fire marshal. Provided CY2002 call load data to the GIS manger for mapping.
- Attended various meeting and training sessions for new CAD and radio systems.
- Continued to work with Department of Technology Systems on the ongoing problems with EMBRS and the old CAD system.
- Drafted an organizational chart and workplan for the automation section for the Chief Information Officer.
- Worked with the Chief Information Officer on a policy and procedures for non-county outlook users.
- Responded to an average of 10 calls per day for users having problems with EMBRS, Outlook, computer hardware and/or software.

Technology Training

- Facilitated Mobile Data Computer (MDC) Train-the-Trainer (TTT), preparing over 50 trainers from the field (16 hours each) to teach MDC classes. All of this was performed without a single dollar of overtime for uniform personnel -- saving approximately \$25,000.
- Processed approximately 150 career and volunteer personnel through MDC training with a 100% passing rate on the competency-based evaluation. As with TTT, this was accomplished without paying overtime to career uniform personnel (a cost savings of approximately \$7000).
- Continued development of supplemental training materials to provide to field personnel for MDC practice.

PS2000 Team

The team planned and executed tasks to prepare for cutover. Since these tasks are labor intensive, the team identified and secured resources outside the IT department to carry out some of these tasks. These tasks were:

- QA and input operational data into CAD.
- Designed and created test plan to exercise all call types and status. Executed the "lite" version of the test plan to verify that there is no "show stopper" before the software is frozen. The "full" version (i.e. including EMBRS interface) of the test plan will be executed in the coming weeks.
- Prepared and worked on the radio disbursement activities.
- Continue to work with DTS and the vendor to resolve system related issues.
- Worked with ECC to prepare for cutover.
- Worked out a plan with the vendor to participate in the MDC software loading process. The main purpose of this plan is to ensure that the MDC is ready for all the essential vehicles before cutover. This plan also offers us the opportunity to get some hands-on experience and allows us to gain some control of the loading process. The loading process will start in the week of March 17.
- Prepared and configured the FIRE call center consoles for scenario training for ECC personnel.

Corporate Development Services

Fleet and Facilities Section

- Provided support for various fleet and facility issues relating to PS2000.
- A replacement aerial tower, on order from Pierce Manufacturing, had a final inspection. Delivery is expected in March 2003.
- Continued to review and amend wireless phone plans for various personnel in an effort to reduce costs.
- Reviewed and provided comments on the detailed design submission for replacement Silver Spring FS #1.

DFRS Property Section

- Processed 326 property transactions during the month of February 2003.
- Submitted requirements to the Office of Procurement for a new solicitation for uniform alteration and tailoring.
- Submitted request to the Office of Procurement for an extension of the main uniform apparel contract.
- Coordinated process for various levels of review of a recommendation to change the thermal liner specification for DFRS protective coats and trousers.
- Assisted DFRS Safety Team with communication enhancements by developing an alpha-numeric paging clone and a single-digit menu voice mail box system.
- Developed internal plan to manage significant FY03 operating budget reductions

Automation Section

The team planned and executed tasks to prepare for cutover. Since these tasks are labor intensive, the team identified and secured resources outside the IT department to carry out some of these tasks. These tasks were:

- QA and input operational data into CAD.

- Executed the "lite" version of the test plan to verify all call types and status. The purpose of this "lite" version is to verify that there is no "show stopper" before the software is frozen. The intention is that if there is any "show stopper", the team will have enough time to report the problem and have the software patched before the frozen period. The "full" version (i.e. including EMBRS interface) of the test plan will be executed in the coming weeks.
- Prepared and worked on the radio disbursement activities.
- Continue to work with DTS and the vendor to resolve system related issues.
- Worked with D/C Steve Lohr organization to prepare for cutover.
- The MDC software load is behind schedule because of the map load delay from GIS. Worked out a plan with the vendor so that we can bring in FIRE personnel to work along side with the vendor in the loading process. This plan also offers us the opportunity to get some hands-on experience and allows us to gain some control of the loading process. The loading process will start in the week of March 17.
- Prepared and configured the FIRE call center consoles for scenario training for ECC personnel.

DIVISION OF FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICES

Bureau of Operations

Administration

Our focus has been in two areas. First, we have been supporting the development and presentation of the FY04 budget and addressing all necessary planning for implementation if approved. This has taken considerable effort as this is a very challenging budget season. At this point we await the Executives announcement and County Council action before implementing proposed changes.

We have made sufficient efforts to reduce overtime as directed in the FY03 Saving Plan. Over 50 staff have been reassigned to a more efficient shift arrangement. This has resulted in significant overtime reduction. Caution is provided that this is a temporary benefit of current staffing overages and is not a long term solution to fiscal pressures.

Operationally weather has been a focus. With several large snow events we expanded our efforts working with schools, other agencies, and the private sector to address safety issues related to the snow. Of special concern was the "loading" of roofs beyond structural safety. While we did have numerous collapsed roofs and structures are efforts prevented any injury and limited property loss to the extent possible. We believe our proactive work may have prevented a larger number of more damaging events from occurring.

Safety

During this period everyone operational firefighter is being sent to a special training session on driver safety. Initial observations following this indicate a reduction in vehicle accidents, which should result in a more favorable insurance rating and cost.

Specialty Teams

Team training has been mostly delayed by events, weather, and competing training activity associated with driver safety and the new radio system. We will return to a normal team training session schedule in May.

Collapse Rescue/Urban Search and Rescue

The Collapse Rescue Team provided enhanced coverage and technical expertise during the snow events. Their contributions significantly reduced risk, and prevented additional damage from occurring.

Swiftwater Rescue Team

The team continues with a winterized training scheduling but has been delayed by weather and other training to a large extent.

Bureau of Program Support Services

Administration

Communications

Training

Exams completed for Emergency Vehicle Driver Testing in February are:

Written	12
Practical	10

High School Cadet Program continues with 24 EMS students and 12 Fire students.

Two career EMT-Paramedics were awarded charge status in February.

EMT-Intermediate (EMT-I) class continues with 17 students.

Bureau of Life Safety Services

Administration

Fire Code Enforcement

Fire and Explosive Investigation

In February, Fire and Explosive Investigators investigated 27 accidental fires and 12 criminal fire related incidents. The Bomb Squad responded to a total of 20 explosive / suspicious package / letter, threat incidents. The total estimated dollar loss for accidental fires was \$ 1,149,300 and \$ 811,085 for criminal fire related incidents.

The county suffered its first fire fatality this month in Clarksburg. An adult male died as a result of smoke inhalation. He was involved in a single vehicle collision which caught fire.

Lt Shaw and his K-9 Partner Hank assisted D.C Fire Investigators and ATF with a fatal fire investigation that resulted in the arrest of a suspect.

DIVISION OF VOLUNTEER FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICES

- Participated in a Safety Committee meeting
- Briefed Councilmember Knapp on the fire and rescue service
- Attended a Council hearing on the 03 Budget savings plan
- Met with the Fire Administrator, Chief Strock, A/C Bowers and N. Shorb regarding the proposed apparatus backing policy
- Met with OMB reps. regarding the budget
- Attended and chaired the Quarterly EMG meeting
- Met with the Montgomery County Chamber of Commerce Awards Committee
- Was activated with the EMG and conducted snow mitigation for a lengthy number of days
- Met with the County Executive as the Fire Administrator presented the budget
- Attended the monthly Pollution Prevention Committee meeting
- Began the annual, mandatory recertification process
- Attended the Fire Board, Fire and Rescue Commission and Operations Committee meetings
- Mediated personal, personnel and/or sensitive issues with various LFRDs, etc.